



GAVIN NEWSOM, MAYOR  
JARED BLUMENFELD, DIRECTOR

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT  
URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
DRAFT MINUTES

Friday, July 27, 2007 at 10:00 a.m.  
City Hall, Room 400  
One Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call.** The Urban Forestry Council meeting was called to order at 10:17 a.m. Present: Chair Milne; Members Blair, Cohen, Habert, Marks, Sherk, Short, and Sustarich; Excused: Members Boss, Griswold, Nervo, Quirke; and Rodgers, Absent: Member Miller.
2. **Adoption of Minutes of the June 26, 2007 Urban Forestry Council Regular Meeting (Discussion and Action)** Upon Motion by Member Cohen and second by Member Sustarich, the June 26, 2007 Meeting Minutes were approved. AYES: Chair Milne; Members Blair, Cohen, Habert, Marks, Sherk, Short, and Sustarich; Absent: Members Boss, Griswold, Miller, Nervo, Quirke, and Rodgers (Explanatory Document: Approved Minutes of the June 26, 2007 Regular Meeting [http://sfgov.org/site/sfenvironment\\_page.asp?id=63453](http://sfgov.org/site/sfenvironment_page.asp?id=63453)).
3. **November 2007 Potential Ballot Issue: "Parking for Neighborhoods Initiative."** The Council will hear concerns about the potential loss of existing trees/and or planting spaces for new trees if this initiative passes (Discussion). (Explanatory Document: Alert: Parking vs. Trees (Word) <http://web1.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/ALERTPARKINGVSTREES.DOC>)

Sponsor: Council Member Carolyn Blair  
Speaker: Gillian Gillett, San Jose Guerrero Coalition

Council Member Blair introduced Mr. Egon Terolan. Economic Development and Governance Policy

effective of a place for companies to want to locate. If you are replacing office floor area with parking spaces, that would be that many fewer people working and living there.

Mr. Terplan explained that the large part of the measure to increase the amount of parking downtown, provides for a "one size fits all" for all other neighborhoods in San Francisco and would prevent the Planning Department from enforcing neighborhood specific parking requirements. It also provides a new right for an owner of a building up to four residential units to put in at least one accessory parking space without regard to (a) whether the existing structure is located along a transit preferential street, primary pedestrian street or bicycle street; (b) any potential effect on transit stops, bicycle, or primary pedestrian streets; (c) any potential effect on an existing Significant Tree or street tree. There is a provision that you have to provide a one to one replacement of a tree with a new tree no smaller than 15-gallon size within 1000 feet. In addition to the impact on existing street trees, it would also have an impact on the ability to put in new landscape medians. Mr. Terplan reported on other negative provisions in the initiative including the potential of reducing an unknown number of street trees and increasing car traffic in the City. It was stated that this measure does not provide additional public parking—it provides for additional private parking.

Ms. Gillian Gillett, Co-Chair of the San Jose Guerrero to Save Our Streets presented an example of a project on Guerrero Street south of Cesar Chavez Street, discussing adverse effects on older neighborhoods when you allow similar types of streetscape or landscape changes to a neighborhood as proposed in this legislation. Ms. Gillett stated that Guerrero Street south of Cesar Chavez had been widened to create what was thought to be the Mission Freeway. Houses on the east side of the street were moved onto their own back yards and the street was widened from 60 feet to 100 feet. Originally, the neighbors were told that they couldn't park on Guerrero because all eight lanes that were made this way were going to be for moving traffic. As a result, all of the older housing stock had garages shoehorned in front of it, and this portion of Guerrero looks very much like what this initiative would produce in neighborhoods with older housing stock. There are many blocks with no trees at all. They are just not possible because the streetscape is driveway next to driveway next to driveway. In between many of the driveways, there is maybe four or five feet, with utilities in that space, so there is not enough room for a tree. That situation gets worse for streets such as Guerrero Street, which is a primary arterial that connects to a freeway and carries 30,000 or 40,000 cars a day in that you have no human scale buffer between the heavy traffic and the people that live there.

Ms. Gillett discussed the effect on the urban planning quality of neighborhoods where you wind up with neighborhoods where only rich people have trees, and you produce streets that people don't want to live on. It was stated that everybody needs a better quality of life, so you don't want to have young families living on dangerous streets next to high-speed traffic. In the case of the project on Guerrero Street, the previous urban planning decisions were mitigated with the planting of medians, but those would also be potentially in

Ordinance, the long term effects would be detrimental not only to decades of our evolution to transit first, but to our tree planting programs and our transit oriented development. It would nullify the EIR and planning processes in some of our neighborhoods, e.g. Octavia Blvd., Glen Park, Eastern neighborhoods, SOMA, and for neighbors who are planning for green livable neighborhoods that are not dependent on the automobile. Mr. Wong stated that we all have a fondness for the automobile and understand people's frustration when people try to park in the peak of the day.

Mr. Wong stated that downtown planning over the decades has created one of the most vibrant downtowns in this country and the world, and the evolution should continue. Neighborhood planning is also leading to some fine beautiful neighborhoods. Mr. Wong explained that many architects and planners who are aggressive in promotion of a beautiful city are not against cars, but are for better planning and use of cars. This measure sets back the city many decades in a covert way and should be rejected. Because of the politics of parking, there is an interest in the City, but this measure is not the way to go about this issue. People should be educated and examine what the 61 pages really say.

Member Cohen reported that the ordinance is in conflict with the new provisions and the revisions to the tree legislation as well as the new landscaping ordinance, two measures that the Urban Forestry Council in the last 2 ½ to 3 years has worked very hard to pass into legislation. It is also in conflict with the Council's goal to integrate the sustainability of trees and urban forest as part of development. Member Cohen recommended that the Council develop a formal resolution to oppose this initiative.

Member Short agreed with Member Cohen's comments and stated that this initiative would provide for more cars and fewer trees, which means additional pollution and fewer ways of removing the pollution. This measure would also increase the number of climate-affecting gases in San Francisco. Member Short stated that this initiative is in conflict with the Urban Forestry Ordinance and stated that she would inquire as a staff member of Public Works which legislation would trump the other. Ms. Gillett was asked how medians would be affected. Ms. Gillett stated that a full analysis of the ramifications of this initiative has not yet been completed, but reported that based on what is going to happen on the streetscape in front of where somebody is going to put a garage in, that it could potentially change the sidewalk width, which would potentially change the lane configurations, and potentially change its way all the way across the street. Member Short also requested a formal resolution from the Council in opposition to this initiative.

Member Marks stated that usually, if somebody wants to put a garage in and receives sign off from the applicable departments, if there is a tree in the way, the tree goes. The Council should investigate as to what is happening now in terms of which Code or which Department has the ultimate say. Member Marks recommended stronger protection for trees when someone wants to put in a garage, as trees are usually the

unsafe, and would add more pollution. It was explained that political will is needed to protect trees as we are down to 1% large trees out of our whole urban canopy. Member Blair stated that this measure would be bad for the environment, affordable housing, quality of life, and for a rich beautiful City that preserves its culture, history, and its great assets. San Francisco needs preservation of its trees and history. It was reported that the Chronicle reported that there would be no changes in parking regulations without a nine-member vote from the Board of Supervisors. The Council was urged to join SPUR to oppose this ballot initiative.

Chair Milne asked that a Resolution be developed for the Council to consider and vote on at their August meeting to oppose this initiative based on its adverse effects on the urban forest. Member Cohen asked to include in the resolution that the initiative is in conflict with the Urban Forest Plan and other initiatives that the Council has supported and helped create for the past two to three years. Member Short asked to include the need to protect existing trees even with the current sidewalk and driveway applications. Member Habert stated that he agrees that an answer is needed to the parking issue in Neighborhood Commercial Districts (NCD), but this measure is not it. A one-size solution does not make sense in NCD districts where detail for each individual unit is important. An initiative is needed to answer the concerns of small business owners, the Urban Forestry Council, and the community. Member Habert also stated that he has not seen the legislation on this initiative. Member Blair stated that this could be an opportunity for SPUR or other agencies to consider introducing diagonal parking with trees in between parked cars in the parking lanes wherever there is space to implement it. Member Sherk requested that the legislation be included as part of the agenda packet for the next meeting. Member Marks asked to confirm that the Council as a government entity would be able to take a public position against ballot measures.

4. **Change to Urban Forestry Council's Meeting Schedule and Consolidation of Committees.** Council members will discuss changing the number of Committee and Council meetings and/or consolidation of Committees and may vote to recommend changing the Bylaws (Discussion and Possible Action)  
Sponsor and Presenter: Terry Milne, Chair

Chair Milne reported that the Department of the Environment suggested that the Council consolidate its meetings and/or have fewer annual meetings. It was stated that it has been difficult getting people to attend meetings for quorum purposes, and there have been meetings cancelled in the past two months. There are meetings for the full Council and three Committees, with a total of approximately 40+ meetings per year. It was suggested that one possibility could be for the Planning and Funding Committees functions to be combined. Chair Milne asked Council Members for their input into a consolidation plan.

Member Short suggested that Committee meetings be held before or after the Council meeting so one amount of time is allocated per month to this function with concurrence from Members Blair and Cohen

Council will be taking in the future as well as time that the members can devote to the Council. It was stated that the Landmark Tree Committee was formed to streamline the process, but its need could be reexamined in the future. Member Sherk stated that the work of the Council is something that should grow and not be diminished, and it is important to develop ways for the Council and trees to have more impact in the city. It was suggested that the Funding and Policy Committees be combined and that landmark trees could be heard at the full Council.

Member Sutarich suggested that the Landmark Tree Committee remain as nominations require a lot of fieldwork, listening to testimony, and would be too time consuming to work into a Council meeting. Member Habert discussed the lack of participation by the community unless they are petitioning an issue before the Council. It was stated that many people in the city think that the Council and urban forest are irrelevant. Member Habert recommended rethinking what this body does to increase its importance throughout the political arena and community. Member Blair stated that the Council is irrelevant to many people because it has no power to make decisions and should be a decision-making regulating body. Member Blair requested that the Department of the Environment provide more funding to the Council to heighten awareness and preservation of trees.

Chair Milne proposed that the Council vote at their August meeting on changing the bylaws to change the scheduling of Committee meetings as an incremental first step. It was stated that most members felt that the Council and the Landmark Tree Committee meetings should be retained as they are, but there is a possibility to combine the Funding and Planning and Policy Committees at this time.

Item 10 Public Comment was heard before Item 5.

5. **Council Secretary Report. New Ethics Commission Requirements.** (Explanatory Documents: New Regulations on Gifts from Restricted Sources and Subordinates (PDF) <http://web1.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/GiftsfromRestrictedSources.pdf> and Statement of Incompatible Activities (Word) <http://web1.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/SIA070907.doc>) (Informational Report and Discussion). Council Secretary Monica Fish reported on New Ethics Commission requirements enclosed in the packet (see explanatory documents above). It was requested that the Council Members review the information that discusses the types of activities that are not compatible with Council membership and restrictions on gifts from restricted sources and subordinates.
6. **Staff Report.** Staff will provide updates on UFC administrative and programmatic operations relating to research, planning, funding, outreach, and other related activities (Informational Report and Discussion). Council Secretary Monica Fish presented the staff report stating that 105 job applications were received for

Planning & Policy Committee, Chair, Carla Short

A report will be presented on the July 18 Planning & Policy Committee Meeting. The next meeting will be on August 16, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. at 11 Grove Street.

Landmark Tree Committee, Chair, Mike Boss

The July 10 meeting was cancelled due to a lack of quorum. The next meeting will be on August 14, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. at City Hall, Room 421.

There were no Committee Reports heard at this time.

8. **Chair's Announcements:** Terry Milne, Chair, Urban Forestry Council (Information and Discussion). Chair Milne asked that the Landmark Tree Committee at their next meeting substantiate landmark tree criteria findings for a potential landmark tree nomination by the property owner at 4124 - 23<sup>rd</sup> Street.
9. **New Business** (Information and Discussion). There was no new business discussed at this time.
10. **Public Comment:** Members of the public may address the Council on matters that are within the Council's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda.

Ms. Andrea Hassiba, San Francisco resident, stated that she has been a member and involved in organizations such as SLUG, Friends of the Urban Forest, but never knew the Council existed until yesterday. It was stated that Crocker Amazon has one of the last urban forests left in San Francisco outside of the Presidio and Golden Gate Park. It was reported that City Fields Foundation is taking down the majority of the trees in Crocker Amazon (45 trees), which are a minimum of 50 to 60 years old to expand the soccer fields. Ms. Hassiba indicated that she had contacted the Sierra Club and Fisher Foundation who had not responded. A representative from Friends of the Urban Forest responded stating that he had not seen the Environmental Horticultural Report and felt that the public process for project approval moved too quickly. It was stated that Mr. Mar from the Recreation and Park Department expressed regret, but indicated that the project would take care of the inability to maintain the trees because of a lack of City funding.

Chair Milne inquired whether there was a discussion at the Recreation and Park Commission on this issue. Ms. Hassiba stated that there was a community meeting in February, but was told there was no discussion about trees being cut down. Member Sherk suggested that alternative methods of construction be suggested in order to retain the trees, but Ms. Hassiba stated that she had tried this method but was told it was not cost effective. Member Marks suggested inquiring how a private

Public Comment: Mr. Beau Beausdeil stated that the creation of the fifth soccer field is pushing the boundaries of the soccer field out by ten feet and that in turn causes them to have a retaining wall, destroys the root system, and that is why the trees have to come down. Mr. Beausdeil noted the neighborhood appreciation for the park and lack of recognition by City Fields about this fact and the possibility of preserving the trees. A discussion was held on the lack of support by City offices in an effort to preserve the trees and wrong information relayed during the course of City meetings. It was recommended that the Council hold their meetings at a Recreation and Park building at a time when people can attend meetings in order to generate more community interest.

**11. Adjournment.** The Urban Forestry Council Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Copies of explanatory documents are available to the public at the Department of Environment, 11 Grove Street, San Francisco, California between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., or when possible, on the Department of Environment's webpage: [www.sfenvironment.com/](http://www.sfenvironment.com/); or by clicking on the links by each agenda item above; or, upon request to the Council Secretary, at the above address or telephone number 415-355-3709, or via e-mail at [Monica.Fish@Sfgov.org](mailto:Monica.Fish@Sfgov.org) within three business days of a meeting.

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica Fish, Council Secretary  
Urban Forestry Council

Approved:

